



Getting Started

HILLCLIMBING AT WISCOMBE PARK



WISCOMBE PARK
Hillclimb

LIKE MOTORSPORT?
WANT TO HAVE A GO?

An Introduction to preparing yourself
and your car for hillclimbing at
Wiscombe Park

If you fancy some motorsport and want to start on a small budget, then hill climbing is a great option. If you are not already a spectator, do come along and get a feel for the sport – access to the paddock is included in the admission price and the drivers are only too keen to talk about their passion for hillclimbing.

The following introduction provides some background information on how to start hillclimbing at Wiscombe Park. Even at a basic level it is a simple route into the sport but, still lots of fun and adrenaline.

'Speed Events' is the generic term given to the motorsports activities of hillclimbing and sprinting. Hillclimbing is the sport of racing a car from a standing start along ribbon of tarmac to a finish point which is higher than the start - hence 'hill climb'. This is a time trial and you run one at a time.

Sprinting is very similar to hillclimbing, with many competitors doing both types of event, but takes place on flat and generally longer tarmac courses.

If you are not yet ready to participate, there will always be a very warm welcome for you to join the enthusiastic band of marshals or the sociable working parties who do so much behind the scenes to maintain the hill and prepare it for each event.

THE MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

These are covered in more detail below:

- *Licenses and Club membership*
- *Types of car and mandatory modifications*
- *Driver preparation and safety – helmet and overalls etc.*
- *Entering an event*
- *What to do on the day*



LICENCES AND CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Speed events in the UK are governed, regulated and licensed by '**Motorsport UK**'. To compete in hillclimbing at Wiscombe Park you will need a Motorsports License issued by Motorsport UK. The entry level license currently costs £69 and from 2021 this will be known as a 'RS Interclub' license – this will allow you to compete in all the club events at Wiscombe Park in road going cars - we'll explain the term 'road going' in the next section.

Apply online for your license at Motorsport UK. When you receive it you will also get online access to the 'bible' of all UK motorsport – the "*Blue Book*". Section S covers the technical aspects of hill climb cars.

To take part in an event at Wiscombe Park you must also be a member of an 'invited club'. Club membership also opens up a whole range of advice and support as you prepare for your first event. The clubs include Burnham-on-Sea, MG Car Club, Taunton, Torbay and Woolbridge, who are all members of the Association of South West Motor Clubs (ASWMC).

TYPES OF CAR AND MANDATORY MODIFICATIONS

Hillclimbing at Wiscombe Park allows a large variety of cars to compete, ranging from production cars (with varying levels of modifications) and all types of kit cars through to powerful single seaters. Few types of cars are excluded from hillclimbs but note that **hybrids and electric cars are not allowed** at Wiscombe Park or many other venues.

As a beginner with no competition experience and an RS Interclub licence you will be able to drive all types of production and kit cars but will be limited to 1,100 cc engine capacity (or 785cc forced induction) in single seater cars, other than pre 1994 Formula ford 1,600.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CATEGORY AND CLASS

You need to understand what 'class' your car will run in at Wiscombe Park and what modifications are and are not allowed in that class.

The golden rule when thinking about modifications is that *if the Blue Book doesn't say you CAN do it, then you CAN'T.*



Motorsports UK divide all types of cars into what they call categories. The 4 most relevant categories to novices are –

- Road Going Series Production (over 1,000 made per year – e.g. Audi TT, MX5, Renault Clio) – they must have a current MOT, be taxed (unless exempt) and insured. Note the new more basic category of Standard Cars is not given a separate class in the South West.
- Road Going Specialist Production (over 30 but less than 1000 made per year – e.g. Caterham 7) – again require current MOT, tax and insurance.
- Modified Series Production (over 1000 made per year but highly modified – e.g. highly tuned Renault Clio) – not necessarily road legal.
- Modified Specialist Production (over 30 but less than 1000 p.a, e.g. highly modified Caterham 7).

For reference: The Motorsport UK Yearbook, commonly known as the *Blue Book*, is the 'Bible' of UK motorsport, containing all of the Motorsport UK General Regulations that help to ensure safety and fair play across the sport. A new edition is published each year and may include some changes for 2021 – they have now been released and include only the most minimal changes. As mentioned earlier, if in doubt refer to section S of the Blue Book.

Not all cars in a category have the same performance – so to create a level playing field for competitors in different cars, the event organising clubs at Wiscombe sub divide each category into 'Classes'. As an example, the classes run at Wiscombe Park for Road Going Series Production cars are –

- Class A1 - Road Going Series Production cars up to 1,400cc (or turbo up to 1,000cc)
- Class A2 - Road Going Series Production cars up to 1,800cc (or turbo up to 1,285cc)
- Class A3 - Road Going Series Production cars up to 2,600cc (or turbo up to 1,855cc)
- Class A4 - Road Going Series Production cars over 2,600cc
- Class B1 - Road Going Specialist Production cars up to 1400cc
- Class B2 – etc etc

If you have any concerns about which class your car would run in at Wiscombe Park then please use the contact form on this website and we can put you in touch with your local motor club who can help you navigate the rules. It may sound complicated but it's not:

MANDATORY MODIFICATIONS TO A ROAD GOING CAR TO RUN AT WISCOMBE PARK:

- A sticker on the ignition switch to indicate how to switch the engine off if you have an emergency;
- Some yellow tape around the negative / earth cable on the battery (so the marshals know which cable to cut in case of a very serious accident or fire risk);
- Attach towing point eyes both front and rear (in case you break down) – these must be clearly marked in a contrasting colour;
- Two throttle return springs (most modern throttle body systems do have a second spring as standard – but check if you have an old car)
- Attach a timing strut / beam breaker to the front (details in the Blue Book in S.10.9 - sold on eBay)

A set of Race Numbers to stick on your car – these will vary for each event (many people use magnetic backgrounds – Demon Tweaks and other race suppliers are the simplest source) – please note these should not be on the car when you rejoin the public highway, or at least crossed out. Size is 9" per Blue Book J.4.

Other modifications are at your discretion and vary from category to category. The Blue Book defines them; for instance in a Road Going Production car it is possible to change springs and dampers, remap the engine, carry out a wide range of modifications providing the original block and head are retained, fit alternative wheel and a different driver's seat.

There is a choice of tyres, yet again defined in the Blue Book (section L – for Road Going as set out in lists 1.A and 1.B – these latter are road legal track tyres).

DRIVER PREPARATION AND SAFETY: So by now you will have –

- Obtained a motorsport licence
- Joined a local Car Club
- Know what class your car will run in
- Understood the minimum safety modifications you need to make to the car

The car is ready: the next thing to think about is the safety equipment you need as the driver. All are defined in the Blue book, section K.

If you are unclear about anything please contact Wiscombe or your club through the respective websites.

Please also note that the regulations are updated from time to time and this will be advised by bulletins issued by Motorsport UK once you become a license holder.

HELMET, OVERALLS AND SAFETY BELTS ETC

- Race Suit – your suit must be to an appropriate standard for the class you are running in (Blue Book Section K 9.1.2)
- Crash helmet (full face for a Caterham 7 type open vehicle without a windscreen) – must be to an approved standard as defined in the Blue Book – motor cycle helmets, however fancy will not do!. We recommend you go for one of the latest standards such as FIA 8859-2015 or Snell SA 2015. We also suggest you buy a helmet suitable for Hans / FHR posts. (Section K 10.3.1)
- Safety belt requirements vary for different categories (section K.2). The minimum requirement is for Road Going cars, which is a belt with three secure anchorage points – this also applies to the requirements for the MOT.
- If you enter an event in the Modified Production category then you will need a Hans / FHR device. FHR stands for Frontal Head Restraint and they are designed to protect the neck in the event of an accident by reducing the speed and the distance that it is thrown forward by the impact.
- Gloves – fire retardant gloves are not required for road going classes but are required for other classes (Section K 14.3 e)

A word of **caution:** driver equipment is expensive – make sure you **double check** it is suitable for hillclimbing and seek advice to make sure your purchase is to the latest standards and future proof (Blue Book section K).

Well done - you are now ready to enter your first event.



WHAT TO DO ON THE DAY.

Before each event you will be sent joining instructions from the organising club. These will tell you things such as:

- Where the event is and how to get there
- What time the circuit / paddock are open, important if you are arriving the evening before the event.
- What time signing-on and scrutineering (of the car and driver safety equipment) starts – much of this was carried out remotely in 2020 due to COVID-19, so please check the instructions very carefully.
- When practice starts
- Whether there will be a pre-start drivers' briefing
- Lunch tends to be a movable feast – but is generally between the 2nd and 3rd runs. If you are using the excellent catering facilities at Wiscombe then please buy your lunch early as during the actual lunch break catering priority will be given to the marshals
- When you can walk the course (essential for your first visit to any hill)
- Who you will be competing against in your class
- A diagram of the paddock layout (where your reserved parking space is in the paddock)

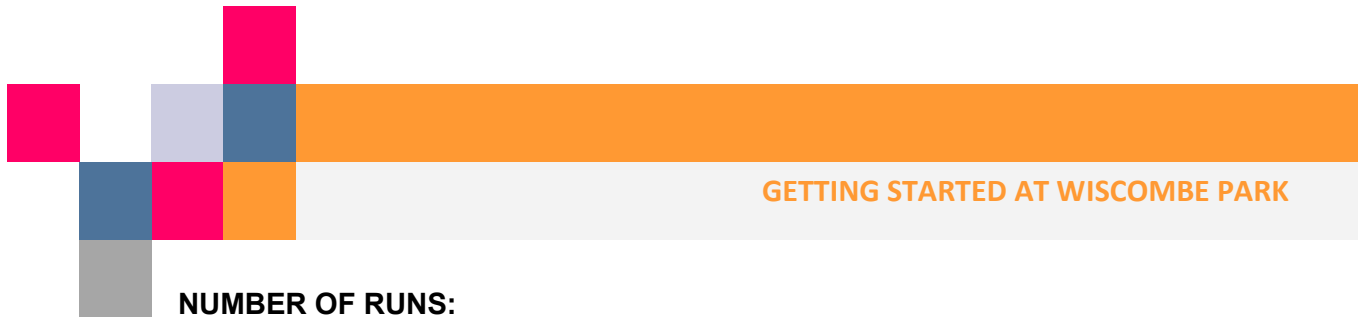
YOUR DAY AT WISCOMBE - ENTERING THE PADDOCK

Please note that the Wiscombe competitors' paddock is a sloping grass area - and you must not drive uphill on the grass. Follow the tarmac and gravel roads until you are above your paddock space and then drive slowly downhill into your allocated space.

Before getting to go up the hill in your car you need to complete a few formalities on the day:

- **Signing-on:** You need to take yourself, your license and any club and championship ID cards to the signing on office – note these procedures were different during COVID-19. Every event seems to have a different method for how this works, but it's very straightforward at Wiscombe Park.
- **Scrutineering:** Your car and personal safety kit will need to be inspected by a Motorsport UK scrutineer. These generally come to you at Wiscombe and are not to be feared. For production cars it is a good idea to have proof of current Road fund and MOT (paper documents or recent screenshots from the details held at the DVLA).
- **Drivers Briefing:** Normally, before the event all the drivers will be called to a meeting where the Clerk of the course will explain how the day is to be run and what is expected of everybody. **Attendance is mandatory.** Make sure you attend these, especially if you are a new driver. Sometimes these may be only for new drivers or those who have not been to Wiscombe for some time
- **Walking the course:** First timers are encouraged to walk the hill at Wiscombe to familiarize themselves with the course. You will find that even the most seasoned competitors will walk the course early in the morning before the drivers briefing - don't be afraid to tag along and ask questions.





The normal number of runs at Wiscombe Park is usually:

- Two timed practice runs in the morning
- Two timed competition runs in the afternoon

This will be confirmed at the 'Drivers Briefing'. Please note that 'practice' is only practice. Please do not exceed your capabilities in practice - drive sensibly in practice and get used to the course. Very often the Wiscombe hill is slippery and greasy in the mornings before the sun has had time to dry out the tarmac under the trees. Please treat the course with respect and stay safe.

YOUR FIRST RUN:

Once all the paperwork is completed you're ready to go. You will be called by 'batch' number to the start line (or invariably the start line queue) – at some venues you run in reverse number order, i.e. highest numbers first. Quite often there will be a noise test, where you will be asked to hold the engine at 2/3 maximum rpm for a few seconds.

When it is your turn you will need to drive to the start line where the marshals will line your beam splitter up with the starting beam – be in neutral with the handbrake off. Then you just have to wait for the green light (about 5 metres in front of you – normally two small green lights side by side at about 1 metre height) and off you go. A point of note is that the green light does not indicate that the timing has started, merely that the course is clear for you to go. You can therefore take your time and go when you are ready.

IF YOU SEE A RED FLAG BEING WAVED THEN SLOW DOWN TO A STOP AND AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS.

Thanks for reading this far - It may seem daunting the first time you read all this but after your first event you will be much more confident of all the rules, protocols and procedures. If at any time you are unsure just shout out for help.

Good luck and enjoy your day at one of the best hillclimbs in the country.





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www.reis.co.uk
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